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Don't Let a DUI Take Away Your Independence this Fourth of July

Law Enforcement to Increase Enforcement throughout the Holiday Period

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – One of the most anticipated summertime holidays is just around the corner, and many have begun planning their celebrations with friends and loved ones. Alongside the fun and festivities, law enforcement agencies throughout California will be stepping up high visibility DUI enforcement for the Fourth of July holiday. The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) reminds you that while Independence Day is most commonly recognized as a time for barbeques and fireworks, the holiday is also one of the most dangerous of the year for DUI-related incidents and fatalities.

During the 2015 Fourth of July holiday period, 146 people were killed in crashes involving at least one driver with a Blood Alcohol Content of .08 or higher. In California, the July Fourth holiday ties with New Year's as the highest alcohol DUI fatality holiday period. A DUI without a crash involved can cost up to \$10,000, the loss of a driver license and even a job.

"The fun associated with the Fourth of July can instantly turn tragic for those who fail to have a plan in place ahead of time," said OTS Director Rhonda Craft. "When planning, it is important to also remember that DUI doesn't just mean booze. Consuming prescription drugs or marijuana puts you at the same risk for a DUI – and possibly even worse consequences when combined with alcohol."

To help ensure a safe Fourth of July celebration this year, the California Office of Traffic Safety reminds drivers to have a plan in place *before* heading to a party or event. With so many options for a safe and sober ride home, including rideshare services, there is no excuse for driving under the influence.

Party hosts should not let anyone drive when they have consumed enough alcohol, marijuana, or prescription medications to impair their judgement or driving abilities. Take their keys and help them find a safe ride home.

Those heading out on the town can download the OTS "DDVIP" mobile app in the Apple or Google Play stores. The app offers free non-alcoholic beverages and other free perks at local bars and restaurants for the designated driver in the group and includes links to ride-sharing services to get home safely.

Anyone who sees an impaired driver on the road should immediately contact law enforcement by dialing 911; it could save a life.

For more information on staying safe this Fourth of July, or to learn more about other OTS efforts, visit www.OTS.ca.gov. To follow along with OTS, join us on Twitter at @OTS_CA or "like" us at www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS.